

Point Three



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SPECIAL ISSUE

Point Three

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Opinions expressed (including the editorial) are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Toc H Movement.

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Toc H seeks to create friendship and understanding among people of all backgrounds and beliefs. Local group activities range from holidays for the handicapped and children's playschemes to arts festivals and even bird watching. Toc H is short for Talbot House – the soldiers' club in Belgium founded by the Reverend 'Tubby' Clayton in 1915. Today Toc H provides opportunities for people to test the relevance of practical Christianity and we welcome anyone who would like to give us a try.

Members accept a four fold commitment:

1. To build friendships across the barriers that divide man from man.
2. To give personal service.
3. To find their own convictions while always being willing to listen to the views of others.
4. To work for the Kingdom of God.

This magazine, which acts as a forum for ideas about Toc H and about the world in which we live, takes its title from the third of these Four Points – to think fairly.

Cover Picture

Greenham Common. See centre page articles and Editorial.

Photo: Melanie Friend

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Editorial

'Is she one of THEM?'

'Oh No, not Greenham Common again!' may well, I suspect, be the lament of some readers as they open this issue. It is certainly true that Greenham Common in particular, and the Peace Movement in general, do occupy a lot of space in the media. It is also extremely unlikely that two brief articles, by two young members of Toc H, will offer any amazing new insight, or any stunning new piece of information. Why, then, does this issue carry these articles?

I suggest there are three good reasons why *Point Three* should carry such material, and they go to the heart of Toc H. The first is, simply, that we are meant to be a mixture of people. At its best, Toc H is indeed a wide mixture, and we discuss the differences between us, whether they be of race, class, background, education, political opinion or whatever. If we did not have in the Movement young women who agree with Greenham, and others who disagree, we would be the poorer. The essence of Toc H is that we welcome a wide diversity of people and see the differences as enriching, rather than divisive. They cannot be enriching unless we acknowledge them, explore them and accept them. Under the Third Point of the Compass we pledge ourselves to 'listen to the views of others' and thus to 'form our own convictions' and such a pledge would be meaningless if we were to avoid controversial political topics. If Toc H sets itself up as a refuge from reality, in which certain topics are not mentioned, it becomes irrelevant. Toc H is not meant to be a cosy collection of people, talking only about what they agree on. It is meant to be a fellowship which, because of its unlikely mixture, will be at times turbulent and tricky, but also immensely creative and reconciling. 'Fellowship' wrote Alec Churcher, 'is the pearl of great price and, like the pearl within the oyster, is the result of pain and irritation'.

The second reason why we should be prepared to consider such matters relates to the Second Point of the Toc H Compass. In that, we are called to give personal service, and also to study local, national and international conditions, and their effect on people. There is no doubt whatsoever that the whole issue of nuclear weapons does affect people very profoundly. We live under the shadow of the bomb (or, as some would argue, its protection) and its very existence affects the lives of us all. The need for such weapons is thus a very proper subject for debate in this Movement, even though we shall never all agree. That is not the intention.

The third, and perhaps major, reason is about barriers. We are pledged to try and break down barriers. Most barriers exist in the mind, and very often the fear, mistrust and even hate we feel for other groups of people dissolves when we actually meet them as individuals. In the time honoured words of Barclay Baron 'To Conquer Hate would be to end the strife of all the ages, but for men to meet each other is not impossible, and it is half the battle'. That is at the root of the Toc H experience. However, we cannot meet everyone, and, in the absence of meeting, the danger is that we tend to accept prevailing myths about other groups. It is always very easy to accept the sort of stereotyped view of other groups which is offered in gossip or by sensation seeking journalists, or by deliberate propaganda. Most of us can summon up an immediate and simplistic picture of what a picketing miner is like, or what an IRA terrorist is like, or what a Gypsy is like – and yet, deep down, we know that it isn't actually quite like that. We know they are all different, and that not one of them actually fits the stereotype.

The Peace Movement, too, suffers from the same danger of stereotyping. The 'typical' Greenham Common woman is depicted as 'dirty, noisy, naive, irresponsible, and should be at home with her kids' and is 'probably a Lesbian'. Equally, in some quarters, any woman who disagrees with the Greenham protest is depicted as 'neo-fascist, hard boiled, and militaristic'. It is in order to help the erosion of these stereotypes that this issue carries these two articles. One is from a woman who goes to Greenham, and the other is from a woman who will not go. Both are Toc H members – both have given time to help, and to lead, Toc H projects – both are sensitive, caring people – and they both give the lie to the sort of stereotyping that occurs so often when Greenham Common is mentioned.

In his now famous interview with 'The Times' in October, about the Miners Strike, the Archbishop of Canterbury said 'We must refuse to accept stereotypes of either side'. In our efforts to build bridges and to bring understanding and reconciliation, it seems important to do what we can to challenge false stereotypes. I hope that, in some small way, this issue will do just that.

JEM

Bikes, Rafts and Dead Fish!

Toc H is about bringing people together, it's true, but maybe one can go too far? Not at all, said Toc H in the Leicester area, and proceeded to set what is, perhaps, a new level of 'mixture'.

For their 1984 project, Toc H in Leicestershire decided to raise a significant sum for the local Talking Newspapers for the Blind. Aware that they needed help, they proceeded to involve a wide collection of people in a wide variety of events. Primary School children from Melton Mowbray organised a sponsored walk; senior citizens in Melton organised a coffee morning; members of Thurmaston Age Concern helped too, as did local firms and many other groups and individuals.

One new form of sponsored event was organised by Les Hurst, of Anstey Branch. He persuaded a dozen anglers to enter a sponsored fishing competition, which raised over £230. A trophy was awarded to the angler with the most sponsorship, not the biggest fish, and this was won by Ron Symons, who actually landed a 7lb 14oz carp. Les, (eighth from left in the photograph) offers to advise any other Branches interested in repeating this type of event.

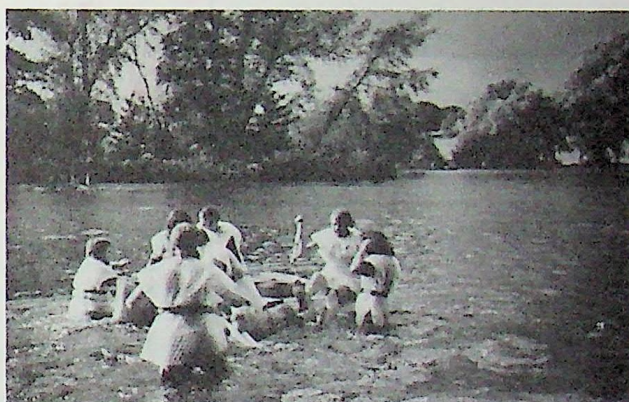


A fishy story! The sponsored anglers on parade.

Help also came from the Four Aces Motor Cycle Club, which meets weekly in Rothwell. They organised a raft-race at Wickstead Park, Kettering, and raised over £120 for the appeal. They then all drove over to the Toc H Day Conference

at Market Harborough, and presented the cheque to Central Councillor Lilian Shaw (seen accepting the cheque).

At the last count, the Appeal has raised nearly £3,500.



Central Councillor Lilian Shaw receives a cheque for £120 from the Four Aces Motor Cycle Club.



Photo: Sal Lo Galbo

Apologies!

The back cover picture of the Menai Strait, in the April issue, was by Douglas Gowan. We apologise for the omission and thank Douglas Gowan for the use of the photograph.

Round and about

Swim raises £800

Thurrock Branch held a sponsored swim and raised more than £800 in pledges. The swim was held to raise money for the group's work, including running two specially constructed ambulances for transporting handicapped people to clubs and on outings.

More than 100 swimmers of all ages took to the water, the youngest being Kerry Lloyd of Tilbury at the tender age of four.

One Year later . . .

Ann Self writes from Saltburn: *'March 1984 saw the re-opening of the newly christened Coach House. Its name is derived from the fact that originally it was a coach house to the nearby Brockley Hall. It had been rented by the old Saltburn Branch for many years and when the Branch closed, the premises were almost handed back to the owners, but Teesside District decided to go forward in faith and give it a facelift as the beginning of a new Branch was in sight.*

'At the beginning of April the DEC took on the services of three young women through the Manpower Services Commission. Initially they were to conduct a mini-survey in Saltburn to find out what services and activities Toc H could provide in the Coach House. This exercise has proved to be a wonderful excuse for knocking on doors and telling everyone about Toc H. Out of the findings of this survey has come a Sunday lunch club for lonely people, a weekly unemployed 'pop in' and two children's clubs for which the demand was such that the number of children turning up couldn't be coped with at one session! In addition a very successful summer holiday playscheme took place with requests for another in '85, and disabled folk have been taken out to "see the sea".

'If you should be holidaying in the vicinity of Saltburn-by-Sea perhaps you may like to pop in and see us. The Coach House is open to serve coffee every Thursday morning from 9.30am to 12 noon and has a bric-a-brac stall and a very popular Next-to-New corner. But if you live in calling distance why not bring a party for the day? Our facilities for disabled are excellent and a breath of sea air does everyone good.

'As far as Saltburn community is concerned Toc H is back on the map and noted as being very friendly. The DEC's step forward in faith has certainly been justified.'

No fleas on Watford Ladies

Watford Women, a very small Branch, recently organised a flea-market, raising £25 for the Peter East Bangladesh Fund and Friendship Circles. Sounds like fleas are holding their value better than sterling!

Branch life in deepest Somerset

Fred Taylor, from Walton Branch, writes: *'A little news item about our Branch which is near Street in Somerset. Each year we arrange a Coach Outing for the over 65s and those who are unable to go because of disability are given extra gifts at Christmas. Those in nursing homes and hospitals are not forgotten and are also given gifts. Jumble Sales and a Summer Fayre are our main sources of income.*

'We also arrange other outings including mystery tours which has everyone guessing and hinting as to our destination. One to Bovey Tracey and Becky Falls last year was especially enjoyed.

'For quite a few years now, we have bought and erected a Christmas tree

on the Cross, which is more or less in the centre of the village and to which our local people really look forward. We have it well illuminated and each year we have a United Carol Service around the tree which is always well attended.'

Rowing for Cambridge

Sarah Collins, who has been a project volunteer with Toc H in Dunstable has been chosen for the women's boat race crew in the lightweight section. Sarah helped Toc H, as well as working with the Sue Ryder Foundation, during a 'year off' after leaving school.

Erratum

Rev'd Gordon Clark writes to point out a small error in *Point Three* in May 1984. He assures us he still is (not 'was') Padre to Tunbridge Wells Branches. He tells us also that he recently took part in the Centenary Memorial Service for General Gordon of Khartoum, having himself preached the memorial sermon in 1954 in Khartoum itself.

What is happening -Part 1

by Tom Gulliver

Something is happening in Toc H. There are signs of a growing awareness of the spiritual reality behind the commonplace. A realisation that living to oneself is deeply unsatisfying, and that our deep need to belong and to care has to be met. A paradox of our human nature is that, although we are individuals, if we behave individualistically we deny the spiritual reality of our nature. Toc H provides an opportunity to develop our capacity to express those spiritual values which strengthen our humanity and increase our awareness of our interdependence as autonomous beings. But this development is a process, not a once-for-all event.

At our first meeting with Toc H two things happen. There is a welcome which immediately brings us in and makes us a part of whatever is going on. Secondly, we are given an opportunity to join in some form of service with others. Both of these meet deep human needs, even if we are not conscious of the need. For some,

the group and the activity will be enough. On reflection, they may wonder at the immediacy of the experience in which they were caught up, but they will not want to take it further. For others, the recognition of the limitations of service-by-itself-for-itself can be the starting point for exploring the underlying spiritual reality of what we do and are.

When the Toc H experience is so dynamic that it continues to hold people and to draw them on to further activities, it is because the underlying spiritual reality is being made conscious. Toc H is about meeting human needs, both external and internal, and it is true to itself when it enables people to recognise the inner reality in every situation and in every person, including themselves. Especially, including themselves. It is that inner reality which prompts us to offer ourselves as helpers. It is good fun, of course, and it is great to meet new people, but the quality of the experience



Photo: Roy Nieper

Handicapped Scouts abseiling at an Agoonoree Camp for the disabled, at which members of Toc H Brisbane, Australia, are much involved.



Photo: Enfield Gazette

Happy birthday to two 80 years old twins, Ethel Constable (left) and Lousie Lawrence. Ethel is a member of Enfield Women's Branch and is still involved in a wide variety of community activities.

which impresses us, derives from the underlying spiritual reality being made conscious in us. It is the inner reality which gives deeper meaning to the outer. In this sense, the Toc H experience is sacramental. The more conscious we make the spiritual reality, the more worthwhile are our relationships and the more easily will we move towards greater maturity as persons. This is a continuing process in which we help each other. But no person or small select group can rightfully claim to know the formula or method for others.

The early members of Toc H expressed their understanding of an essentially religious experience in the language they found most appropriate. But they were wise enough to recognise that the experience was more important than what they said about it. Consequently, Toc H has been remarkably free from a particular God-language, and we have never imposed a credal test for membership, in the sense of a closely defined formulation which had to be accepted as a total package. It is important that we do not lose that insight. We must not be trapped into denying the validity of another's religious experience solely on the grounds that it is not expressed in traditional language.

The question of language is important, since it is how we make sense of the experiences we have. If we are to reach a better understanding of what is happening in Toc H, we have to be patient with each other. It is easy to argue that, if we are talking about a religious experience, which we are, then the most appropriate language is religious. This may well prove to be so, but if the terms do not convey the same meaning to everyone, then their use prevents understanding. There was a time, not so long ago, when it was possible to use the symbol of Light and the act of corporate prayer as starting points for a discussion on the deeper meaning of the Toc H experience. This could be done because those activities had some conscious meaning for all those concerned even if they were not all practising Christians. There does not appear to be the same common ground today. If that is so, it is something we have to take seriously. It would be a mistake to suppose that symbols can never be changed. There may well come a time when even fresh interpretations will not suffice, and new symbols and a new language have to be allowed to evolve.

It is essential for the life of Toc H that we should remain true to the insight that the

experience is primary, and the descriptive language is secondary. In helping each other to reach a deeper understanding, we have to draw upon our own experience, but this does not mean insisting upon our interpretation. It does mean listening carefully, in a small group where we trust each other, where we contribute to a common pool of experience from which each can draw what is needed. In such a group we need not struggle to fit the way we feel into a particular mode of expression. Perhaps one of the things that is happening in Toc H is the expression of spiritual truths in a different way. A way that is meaningful for today.

Toc H consists of people who share part of their lives together. There are many more who would like to join in that if we could find the right way of telling them about the depth and quality of the encounter in the experience. Is our fellowship open enough and trusting enough to allow us to explore together new ways of presenting old truths? It would not be the first time that Toc H has been in the forefront of new developments. How tragic it would be if we denied to others a deeper understanding of what is really happening because we were stuck with a particular language.

TO BUILD BRAVELY

The Noise

One advantage of being slightly hard of hearing would be that with a hearing aid you could turn down, or off, the incessant noise. Bangladesh is the most vibrant, noisy, mobile country I have ever visited. At 5.30am we are awakened by our local Mullah at the Mosque. He invites everyone to pray. Years ago he stood alone in his tower and called. Today he has the help of a microphone, amplifier and four speakers. He does this five or more times during the day. Snuggling down again under my mosquito net and dozing off, I am awoken again about 6.30pm by cockerels, rickshaws, cars, lorries, tractors, museum piece buses with 90 people on board with places only for 40, and bawling trades-people. Workshops are near, so metal-work and wood yards are in full swing. You give in and have tea, plan the day and have a wash. One hundred million in Bangladesh all get going simultaneously and the struggle for this day's survival has begun in earnest. From the air it must look like an ant hill of humans.

Support Systems

Once Peter's door is open, it is the opportunity for just about everyone to walk in. Community life there means there is no space, no privacy, no secrets, all is shared. People sit down and read your books and letters and turn on the radio and walk out. They cannot read and

write English but it's all very interesting. We make plans for the day and try to time some of our activities. We have to state Bangladeshi time for appointments (give or take two hours) or English time (which means what you say).

One day we were invited to celebrate a wedding. The two families would be very honoured to have the two Englishmen present. They made a point of first asking us to see the bridegroom ritually dress at his home. We were then taken to the bride's home and shown her dowry displayed outside for all to see. I was able to meet her and take her photograph. The bridegroom was a less fortunate man. The first time he would ever see her would be an hour after he had married her, and all the guests had had a meal. We were invited to the meal and had our photo taken. We were asked to witness the registration ceremony, and after the priest and various other dignitaries had made speeches, the bridegroom's family and then the bride's relations had to sign the certificate. Anyone over 40 probably cannot write. This is easily overcome by asking a small boy to step forward from the assorted crowd of onlookers. He bows his head. It is covered in rancid pumpkin oil. Those who cannot write then rub their thumbs on the boy's hair, dab them on carbon paper and make a thumb print. The bridegroom finally meets his bride, and takes her to his home, where he stays for three days and then moves on to his new hut. She may be lucky to see her

parents once or maybe twice that year. It depends on the contract. She may be 15 or 16.

Peter's day

Each day starts and finishes with a sit-in at the local shop. Here Peter sees everyone pass by and knows who has eaten that day and those who have not. He meets the members of the Village School Committee, who double as the social responsibility group. They consult and share concerns. Members of the evening classes who come to the school five nights a week, some 25 young people 16-25 years, also support Peter in his work, as a kind of youth action group. Over a long lunch hour, Peter gets extremely excited about the success of his lettuce plantation. He has succeeded in getting 23 lettuces to grow, first on wetted toilet tissues under polythene and then transplanted into a basket of earth. They are actually growing. The winter is here. During the first week in December the market has tomatoes and oranges and vegetables available. Peter could have salad and use the salad cream I brought with me (after I have returned, of course). But for a Bangladeshi to buy two pounds of tomatoes he would have to invest a week's salary. Here in England, would we pay £140 for a kilogram of tomatoes? There is a lot of fruit available in Bangladesh, but 80% of the people have to scrape by on rice and lentils all year round.

What are you Going to Do?

We talked a lot about what we, Toc H, could do to help. Every time we did this, we looked at the collection of villages where Peter lives. We then looked at the district, then to the area, and then to the country, and finally to the 100,000,000 people who make up the entire country — a land mass only the size of England but with twice as many people as we have in the United Kingdom. They are only able to use 50% of this land space, and for only six months of the year, due to monsoons, flooding etc. We had to keep coming back to where Peter is. That is where we can help and enable the quality of life to rise very slowly with the people encouraged to help themselves. They do need our financial support. Our contribution, however small, is essential. The £1 sterling converts to 32 Taka. For this amount per week a family could survive and children could resume valuable schooling, and the pressure could be taken off a mum to provide food for



To Build Bravely — Part Two of a report on a recent visit to Bangladesh by Regional Staff Member John Burgess.

her family. Mums always hold back when food is available and so, inevitably, they go without more often, get weaker and die, leaving homeless orphans. £52 for the year would be the commitment for any one individual, Branch or District. We could budget, by four quarterly payments, two half yearly, or one year in advance. Peter would be able to visit your family each week and keep us up-to-date on their progress.

Many people wish to send Peter clothes. The poorest families have little or no clothes for the youngest members, and these are desperately needed. When some costings were made we discovered that even if clothes were donated, and the postage paid from the UK to Chittagong Port, Peter would have to pay a handling charge, Customs and Excise, transport for him to travel 250 miles each way, and then he wouldn't be able to carry very much. Instead, Peter has now found that an American charity has undertaken to get large crates of good quality clothes right to Sylhet Town, only four miles from him, and for 25p to 5p per item he can purchase just what he requires and distribute direct to the needy families.

Another thing I learnt is that, due to malnutrition, people suffer many organic and skin problems. A chronic one is cataracts. There is a scheme that for £83 per annum a bed can be secured for 26 patients to have a restorative operation. It takes two weeks from admission, operation, convalescence and to leave. Also Lady Lions International organise mobile eye camps, and give consultations at these for just 20p per time.

Small boys have been helped to start a 'business' by selling cigarettes, one at a time, on small boxes at street corners. For two pounds a child can be set up in trading and help towards his family budget. Given seven pounds he can purchase a basket and buy enough fruit and vegetables to trade.

Duck Farming is a new idea for helping a village. Forty ducks are purchased for about £20 and the village sends a member from the community to the agricultural school. They learn how to feed, breed, care for and generally market duck eggs. Chickens in Bangladesh are as big as bantams and eggs are more like budgies eggs. Each month such ducks would generate 800 Taka and 26 families could live on the proceeds.

The elderly and disabled have a very bad time as society cannot afford the luxury



Peter with Salim, his house boy, outside Peter's home.

of looking after them when they cannot help themselves or contribute anything to the family purse. Often they are discarded or just left to cope as well as their age or handicap allows. Peter is helping more and more with financial support from Help the Aged and Toc H members.

One problem with which we are constantly wrestling is how to start some income-generating activity. This would be for widows, for disabled people, for children. But it's a tremendous problem — much much more difficult than I had realised — because in this country where there are vast numbers of unemployed people and everybody is already thinking from a commercial point of view 'How the deuce can I earn more money?' For us to come up with an idea which is going to solve this for the very poorest of the poor is not easy. But we are still working on it, and we are still getting advice and having discussions and so on. And I still hope — so much — that one day we'll be able to come up with an idea where we can train children and young people to earn their living instead of having to beg or push rickshaws or all the horrible sorts of jobs that they're having to do now, including scavenging for food round the markets. And I pray, and I'm sure you'll all pray with me, that we shall find this solution.

It seems we are a world where one half is hell-bent on introducing machines to do men's work and have systems and computers to take away any sense of man's contribution to his society and job satisfaction, when, on the other side millions of people with no machinery and many dormant skills, are looking for help to use their talents.

Peter's expectations for 1985 are:

To continue the work with Khasdabir primary school; give as much help as possible to the desperately poor children of the school; build up our organisation to ensure the continuity of our work, with wide local involvement; to continue

searching for a solution to the street children problem; try to do more for the benefit of the poor widows and elderly to alleviate some of their suffering; to get what warm clothing is possible for the little children; to continue supporting poor families who were victims of this year's floods and who are rebuilding and repairing their houses under a self-help scheme. This support includes 'a school under the sky' where the children have been supplied with books and slates, soap and ointment for skin disorders, and voluntary teachers who are bringing the children forward in preparation for admission into the extended primary school.

A reporter once asked Ghandi what he thought of Western civilisation, and he replied that he thought it would be a good idea! We in the West could learn a lot from our warm and loving Bangladeshi friends. I found the Toc H spirit so many times there — the starving widow-family's welcome, the children, the man who donated the land, Salim — Peter's house boy, the School Committee and the youth action group. They are all sharing and supporting, even though they have nothing to share in our terms.

I was asked, on my return, if I had wanted to stay with Peter in Bangladesh, but I am sure the right person is already there. He is doing a remarkable job with people who share a totally different culture, worship in a different way, and barely survive. Peter, in his quiet unassuming way, talks about being Bangladeshi, instead of Moslems, Hindus, rich and poor, jobless and employed, landless and peasants. We have to support his devotion to, and love of, these people who respond to his caring, smiling, good-natured way of just being Mr Peter or Peter Bhai.

Footnote:

A tape/slide programme is being prepared in which Peter talks about his life and work in Bangladesh. Details available from Headquarters.

GREENHAM COMMON

'Why I Go' by Isobel M Bowles

Izzy Bowles has been a member of Toc H for nine years and is currently living in Rainham, Kent. Whilst living in Cheltenham she led projects involving conservation, old folk, Cheshire Homes, and other aspects of Toc H service. She has been involved with project support in Gloucestershire and in local and national discussion groups. She is a trained nurse and has worked in Africa as well as in Britain. (See Point Three, December 1979). She has three children all below school age.

The money required to provide adequate food, water, education, health and housing for everyone in the world has been estimated at 17 billion dollars a year. It is a huge sum of money.

... about as much as the world spends on arms every two weeks.



Photo: Chatham News & Standard

Izzy Bowles (seated left) at a Peace demonstration.

No doubt many Toc H members are familiar with this shocking statement. It will have had special significance to them this Christmas, as they witnessed the millions dying pitifully of starvation whilst yet more and more money was being pledged to means of mutually assured destruction. Nevertheless I thought it would be a rather appropriate opening explanation to "Why I go to Greenham?"

To answer the question 'why do you go to Greenham?' is to try, however inadequately, to explain as an individual the Greenham experience. Of course one can reel off fact after horrifying fact about the nuclear arms race – and the immorality of its very existence, let alone the contemplation of nuclear weapons ever being used – but that has been done adequately before and would somehow fall short of an explanation of why I, as an individual woman and member of Toc H, feel that Greenham is a powerful expression of our struggle to halt the arms race.

Although Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp has been in existence since 5 September 1981, it wasn't until 1983 that I had the opportunity to visit the camp and participate in a Women's Non-violent direct action. Each woman who goes to Greenham is there through her own individual conscience and there is truly no form of leadership; each woman decides on the action she wants to take as her statement against world-wide nuclear madness. Never having been to the Peace Camp before I didn't know quite what to expect, nor did I have a

clear image of Greenham Air base: only second hand descriptions, photographs and reports in the media. These alone were little preparation for the visual and atmospheric impact of both the Peace Camp and the air base. There is a most distinct contrast between the two. The perimeter of the base stretches for nine miles, encircling the best part of Greenham Common and bordering on Crookham Common. It is at best desolate and disturbing, at worst emotionally traumatic and horrifying. The Peace Camp is a number of encampments at each military gate and each of these has been given a colour of the rainbow by the women. The contrast is so stark that its almost like witnessing a tableau of life and death, destruction and creation. The gate I am most familiar with is the Green Gate where, although not as desolate as some gates, the contrast between the base – and its function – and the Women's Peace Camp and its hopes is most apparent. Leading up to the gate is a charmingly picturesque, 'typically English' country lane going nowhere, bordered on both sides by bracken and woodland. And then the lane stops dead; it's rather like walking into a brick wall, such is the sudden visual impact. Not only are your eyes confronted by fencing, barbed wire, observation towers, razor wire, MOD police, Berkshire police patrols, a patrolling helicopter, and painfully young British soldiers, but there in front of you are the silos containing American cruise missiles. It is an awesome feeling to know that in reality you are standing but a few minutes walk away from the means of mass destruction. So awesome a reality in the middle of the Berkshire countryside, between Newbury racetrack and Watership Down, that it seems somehow surreal. They are here, they exist, they exist to be used. In direct contrast to this is the Green Gate encampment blending in with the woodland, and the comforting aroma of woodsmoke, cooking and boiling kettles. A warm welcome is given to any woman who wants to pull up a log and partake of nourishment and company, irrespective of who she is or what she is. Contrary to certain public opinion, cultivated by some rather dubious media coverage, the women are warm and accepting and take a good deal of care of their environment. As a peace campaigner I went to see for myself the truth about the peace camp as I was disturbed by media reports. Any fears I had about its value to the peace movement were proved groundless and seeing the contrast between air base and camp has led to my increasing support of Greenham Peace Camp. It embodies what was once a dream slowly becoming a reality: women from all over the world all coming together in one place and overcoming barriers of language and

conditioning. Working together co-operatively in the principles of non-violence and recognising the strength to create we have together. Coming together in recognition of our responsibility for whatever might come from nuclear proliferation — should we see and yet do nothing? And with this comes the realisation that perhaps nuclear, biological and chemical weaponry is a symptom of a sick world and that, to remove this threat once and for all, we need to radically change the very fabric of society itself.

Irrespective of which side of the iron curtain we live on, we all live in a militaristic society and, on both sides of the iron curtain, governments both past and present have a lot to answer for: relying on fear, greed, xenophobia, sexism and nationalistic paranoia to condition and control ordinary human beings. Instead of co-operation we have domination and a feeling of hopeless impotence. Whilst billions of dollars, roubles and pounds are being spent on all kinds of weapons, 1.5 billion people lack access to professional health care, 1.4 billion have no safe drinking water and 500 million people starve. In the West alone twice as much is spent on armaments development as on health services. This is true of our own country and it is disturbing to consider that many of our hospitals and health care services are being cut unmercifully while money is instantly found to cover our ever increasing nuclear shopping bill.

In our nuclear society people are fast becoming expendable in the face of politics, economic theories and defence myths. This is disturbing by itself and becomes more so when one remembers that apart from the past, present and future victims of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings, four million people have died from the effects of low level radiation. Over 200 nuclear devices have been exploded in the South Pacific and resulted in 75% of all babies born in the region of the Bikini Atoll being severely deformed, and an unignorable rise in the incidence of leukaemia, cataracts, skin disorders and cancer (all radiation linked diseases) in adults and children. Are such lives justifiably expendable in our race for nuclear supremacy when 'both sides' have the power to kill us all many times over?

I believe everyone should visit Greenham before coming to a decision about cruise missiles being a necessary evil on our soil. Just one of those missiles contained in the silos at Green Gate has the devastating effect of ten Hiroshimas — Go stand at the gate and tell me you don't tremble for our children's future . . . I went because I was curious: I go back because I've been there!



Photo: Melanie Friend

'The Case Against'

by Helen Ellison

Helen Ellison comes from Blackburn and now lives at Hitchin in Herts. She does Operational Research for British Rail. She has recently joined Toc H but has been involved in projects for several years in the West Midlands and South Wales Region. She is currently a project leader.



The stationing of American Cruise missiles on British soil is often condemned as the involvement of Britain in a disastrous arms race. It is not only unilateralists who take this view. In one British opinion poll held in November 1981, 53% of those questioned were in favour of the removal of American nuclear weapons from British soil, yet only 33% were against the retention of Britain's own deterrent.

Laying aside, for the moment, the moral case against nuclear weapons in general, the main argument condemning the siting of American missiles in Britain is that, in the event of a nuclear exchange, we should be laying ourselves down as a sacrifice for the sake of America. For, even if Britain were to shed its own nuclear weapons, it would remain a major Soviet target because of all the American nuclear weapons in the UK. In other words, whilst Britain continues to be a forward American base it will be highly vulnerable. Getting rid of all nuclear weapons in Britain should, in theory, ensure that Britain would be protected by the American nuclear deterrent but would cease to be a target for Russian nuclear attack, since *'The Soviet Union declared that it will never use nuclear weapons against those States which renounce the production and acquisition*

of nuclear weapons and have no nuclear weapons on their territories'.

This argument does not take into account what being an ally really means. A European member of NATO cannot reasonably expect to be able to base its defence policy on the ultimate guarantee of America's nuclear weapons. Norway has adopted this stance and other West European countries have refused to house American weapons. This can perhaps be put down to their unwillingness to become a target for a Russian pre-emptive strike which, whilst understandable, is hardly honourable in an ally. There seems to be a choice which must be made by Western European countries. Either we each stand alone with, or without, our own nuclear weapons system, or we stand together, as one big NATO alliance, and present a united front. If the Western allies could become totally integrated so that, in military matters, they operated like one big country, they would be stronger and would seem much more daunting to the Warsaw Pact. Assuming, for now, that deterrence actually works, then NATO, operating as one body, should station its weapons in the most strategic positions. These would be in Europe, in order to operate the strongest deterrent possible, and so the countries where weapons were based would not be

GREENHAM COMMON contd from p9

sacrificed for anyone, because the positioning of the weapons would prevent a Soviet attack. For many years cities, military bases and communications centres in Western Europe have been part of the Soviet target plan. The introduction of the SS20 has greatly increased Russian capacity to make pre-emptive strikes against vital military targets. They could cripple the NATO defences in Western Europe, leaving America to decide whether to retaliate with their strategic forces, inviting devastation of their own cities. The cruise missile project puts another stage into the possible escalation by allowing an allied response short of strategic retaliation. It also provides a lever with which to persuade the Russians to eliminate the SS20.

There is a lot of unease about the fact that cruise missiles in Britain are solely controlled by America, since Britain would become involved in a nuclear exchange between Russia and America, whether it supported America's actions or not. In order not to make its European allies feel that they are being used to further its greatness, America must be prepared to give the country housing a weapon joint control over its use. America claims that dual control would be far too expensive to instal, yet the cost must be negligible compared with the amount they are prepared to spend on the Star Wars project. The Western European allies must place their faith in the value of deterrence if they are to have American weapons on their soil, as it is hard to be a good ally in the knowledge that you would be hit before the person protecting you.

There still remains the question of whether we should be a nuclear power at all. This is another topic altogether and

there are powerful arguments for and against unilateral disarmament. Many of the arguments put forward by those in favour of nuclear disarmament are moral in nature, and it is evident that many of those who support the unilateral disarmament movement believe that their case is morally superior to that of their opponents. They are clearly unmoved by fear of war or by consideration of strategic factors. The campaign has the air of a crusade.

Of course killing thousands of people at a time is evil, but the unilateralist arguments seem to confuse the potential to kill with the act of killing. There is little virtue in simply being against nuclear war — we must also try to prevent it. In other words, the only truly moral approach to nuclear war is to deter it. Thus deterrence, not just the denunciation of nuclear weapons, must be the priority of anyone who is really concerned about the great moral issues nuclear war raises. It is paradoxical that the moral way to avoid nuclear war is to acquire nuclear weapons, but this must be faced up to.

People are very concerned that the 'arms race' is bringing us into increasing danger. However, in the mid-1950s the US strategic air command could have been wiped out by a Russian first strike, and Russian forces, being even weaker, were more likely to be eliminated if America struck first. Thus whoever struck first could destroy his opponent with very little damage to himself and so, if either side felt there might be a nuclear war, they had an incentive to strike first. Over the last 30 years nuclear weapons have been redesigned and now any country that tried to disarm its opponents with a nuclear first strike could do so only in part, and in doing so would

expose itself to devastating retaliation. Thus the probable repercussions from the initial strike deter a power from making that strike, and so, if it is of greater strategic value to NATO to place cruise missiles in Britain, then there is also a moral case for doing so, since what deters war is not simply more weapons but a protected strategic force that can strike back even if it is attacked first. Such a force removes the temptation to strike first.

However, if we decide we are not prepared to commit ourselves to the NATO alliance, is there still a case for a British nuclear deterrent? After all, the USSR has promised not to attack with nuclear weapons any country which has none on its soil. However the USSR is not the only possible aggressor. For instance, one of the results of the Falklands War may be to consolidate Argentine determination to acquire nuclear weapons. From the 1960s Britain gradually began to reduce its military forces. Thus Argentina indulged its desire to seize the Falklands because it didn't believe Britain could fight. General Galtieri said: *'No, I'll tell you that though an English reaction was considered a possibility, we did not see it as a probability. Personally, I judged it scarcely possible.'*

If British nuclear weapons can deter irresponsible Third World dictators from making an attack, then that alone must surely justify them.

One thing that is important to remember in all discussions on this issue is that people's views are not divided into those of war-mongers and peacemakers. We are all striving for peace. It is our ideas of the way there that differ.

Forthcoming Events

Cotswold Quiet Afternoon

Once again this has been arranged and the date is Sunday 7 July 1985.

The Painswick Society of Friends offer

hospitality at their meeting house, assembling at 12.10pm. The meeting ends at 5pm. The conductor will be the Revd Colin Rudd.

All enquiries to The Revd Hugh Potts, 5 Hilton Close, Hempsted, Gloucester GL2 6LQ, who can supply more details on request.

Beds and Herts Area invite applications for:

1. A Families Holiday week at the Toc H Adventure Centre, Port Penrhyn, Bangor, Gwynedd from 24-31 May 1985.
2. A Families Holiday Visit to Talbot House, Poperinge, Belgium — where Toc H began in 1915 — from 11-13 September 1985.

Full details from John Burgess, 66 Park Meadow, Hatfield, Herts AL9 5HB. Telephone: 07072 64949.

National Development Committee (NDC)

by Nick Gore

What? Why? Who?

If someone said to me 'Nick, Toc H has got an NDC!', I wouldn't be certain whether I should check the honours list, ring the White House, bury my head in the sand or, most probably, ask the three questions above. As I'm actually a member of the NDC, however, I think I'd better do some explaining.

All of us in Toc H believe that we have a lot to share with people around us who want to give, or need to receive, help and support. We would all like to see the work of Toc H develop and to help create more understanding and love within our

communities. This is a very broad aim and, in recognising that we cannot respond to all the needs, I have heard people say 'Well, where is Toc H going?' I think it's a valid question because if we all go in different directions we could become more of a thinly spread puddle than an active Movement!

The NDC has been set up by the Toc H Central Executive Committee to help the Movement to move. We stress the word 'help' and we see our objectives as being to help promote growth, to look at new ways to meet needs, to encourage training and to share ideas. The most important people in this future growth are ourselves, each one of us, as we seek to know the way forward.

In practical terms, there are five members of the team, Alan Brooke, Maggie Kay and myself (all on the CEC), Frank Rice (Secretary) and Helen Powell (Staff). We want to be a resource team for Toc H but we're not going to be passive and may be

the source of a bit of shoving! We hope to be able to talk to Regions about development, to let people know what is going on elsewhere and to offer advice. Communication between people is important for any friendship to be meaningful and this is also true for this committee. We hope to use *Point Three*, as well as sending our minutes to Central Councillors, Regional Chairmen and staff members, so that you may know our thoughts. We hope you'll feel free to contact us. Frank's address is: 'Strathmore', Alcheste Road, Chesterton, Bicester, Oxon OX6 8UW.

This has just been an introduction. Do comment if you want to or wait for the next instalment. Thanks for reading this and I hope, like us, you're encouraged, you're expectant about the direction the Spirit will lead us in the future and that you will come to see the NDC as one means of support and not something else to feed to the hamster!

After three years of fund raising, Ely Branch, with help from Brandon and Cambridge Branches, have raised £600 for three wheelchairs. Our picture shows an evening when Toc H said 'thank you' to all who had helped, and presented the chairs to three local Homes.



Photo: Nick Lyons



Market Harborough Branch took 35 children to the pantomime in Leicester and then organised a party. Some of the children had also enjoyed a Toc H holiday at Mablethorpe last summer.



Joan Hilton presents Albert Iatum of Leigh Toc H, with 24 new tables, a tea trolley, 150 place settings and, later, a plaque for the Toc H centre. The late Leonard Hilton and a support group set out to do this almost three years ago by running bingo on Thursday nights which involves several disabled people. After Leonard's sad death, Joan, his widow, has completed the job.

Photo: Leigh Reporter

Open Forum

The Old House

I was interested to read in Jackie Davidson's letter (February *Point Three*) of another way of getting to the Old House by public transport.

After many visits over the years I have now decided after trying various ways (including on one occasion flying to Ostend) that the best way is to go via Calais. This obviates the long sea crossing to Ostend.

If you catch the 10.30am boat train from Victoria you reach Calais at 3.05pm enabling you to catch the 3.44pm train to Hazebrouck near the French/Belgian frontier. You get there in time to catch the French bus to Abele where you merely get off and enter the waiting Belgian bus that will drop you in the Grote Markt in Poperinge. This way you cut the sea crossing by two thirds and there is much to be said for this if you are not a particularly good sailor.

Derick Parsons
Bembridge, IOW

Toc H and NALGO

I was interested to read in the February and March 'Round and About', the two sides to the argument caused by the NALGO one day strike. Is it a more complex question than either of these statements seem to suggest?

Doris Goodall, the organiser of the Wembley Toc H Blind Social Club, is quoted as being 'hopping mad'. The one day withdrawal of labour had caused extra expense, and threatened to disrupt the Club. The action did prove, however, how dependent the Club was on these NALGO members. Danny McPherson, Hon Sec of the local union branch, even went so far as to suggest that Toc H should join in the protest. His offer to consider the financial loss that Toc H has suffered sounds like an attempt to be fair.

Trade unionists must know that the strike is a very blunt weapon. In this case they wanted to respond to Brent Council's budget cuts, or maybe even to the Government's rate capping plans. They are fighting for their jobs, which may be the jobs of the drivers and escorts that the Club is so dependent on.

Strikes, when you are working with people, cause much upset and pain to the innocent. If the very kind of work you do is threatened, then the action could be to their benefit. I am sure that nurses and teachers are aware of this dilemma. A reluctance to strike has led to nurses receiving pitifully low wages, and teachers now feel they must stop the steady erosion of their wages.

Do you know anybody who goes on strike for the fun of it? I have yet to meet such a person. There is a loss of pay and stress on both the individual and the family. I think Toc H was looking to the short term, and NALGO to the long term. Should Toc H look to the reasons for the one day strike? If so it takes two to make a dispute. Maybe Doris Goodall should be 'hopping mad' with Brent Council and The Government, as well as NALGO.

John Dickson
Solihull

South Africa

In South Africa we were indeed appreciative of Keith Rea's article in your October 1984 issue in his Personal View column.

Our appreciation has now become a grateful acknowledgment of receipt of £230 donation by the UK Branches and members for our local projects.

I would like to express my personal thanks for this recognition of a world-wide sense of responsibility amongst our family in Toc H.

Alec Bullivant
Hon Administrator, South Africa

Work with Deaf and Blind

Reading *Point Three* it has struck me that few Branches or projects deal with the needs of Deaf and Blind people. Just one or two mentions, here and there. These people need help, especially the Deaf-Blind, and are so appreciative of anything that is done for them. Perhaps some 'Jobbies' could explore, and see what can be done in their area.

Ivy Dibble
Chichester

Festival Fund-Drive

What is a Fund-Drive? A question which we hope was asked by all who saw the back page of February's *Point Three*. Well, it was born in Caister Branch, a fairly ordinary and typical Branch with a mix of age and sex. Like all Branches in Toc H we are keen to see the Movement thrive and expand and look forward to a secure future. The firm foundation is already there in the Branches but, like nature, we must constantly renew. We get very annoyed when it is implied that Branches have more connection with the past than the future. It's not true!

The leadership of Toc H have committed themselves to take positive steps to expand and extend the work already being done, but the job that they do will only be as good as their limits of faith and finance. Faith is no problem but finance is. That is why in this special year, a Festival Year, we would like all other Branches to join hands with us and make a one-off special effort to raise funds for our own Family. Festival Fund-Drive fortnight runs from 30 June to 13 July 1985. Please take this rare opportunity to pull together as a national project to secure the future of the Movement that we are lucky enough to share. If you will help please contact Caister Branch c/o myself, 35 Upper Grange Crescent, Caister-on-Sea, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk. Thank you.

Charles Huggett
Caister-on-Sea



The Chairman of the Alloa Branch, Hugh Hunter, presenting a Vocaid machine to Sauchie Hospital. The machine assists patients who have difficulty communicating their needs.

I VOW TO THEE MY COUNTRY

By Ken
Prideaux-Brune

Can you sing the hymn from which I have taken the title of this article without a snigger? For many years it has been fashionable in liberal circles to regard patriotism as outdated, a childish obsession which we have now grown out of. Surely there can be no room in the global village for a crude and narrow belief in the innate superiority of our own little group. All that stuff about the glorious panoply of war, the waving plumes and flashing blades always was nonsense, but now it can be seen to be lethally dangerous nonsense.

But the jingoism which surfaced during the Falklands War, repellent as it was to some of us, shows how deep an emotional hold patriotism still has. More recently we have seen President Reagan harness patriotic feelings to ensure electoral triumph. The tribalism of football supporters shows that more local loyalties run equally deep. Local and national loyalties are an important part of our search for personal identity. I need to know what my roots are, and to be faithful to them, in just the same way as it is essential for my Bangladeshi friends to maintain, in an alien land, their own particular cultural traditions.

Whether we like it or not, therefore, patriotism cannot simply be dismissed as a hangover from the past. Nevertheless the Christian (and, for that matter, the humanist and the adherent of any other religious tradition) has loyalties which are higher than his loyalty to his nation or locality. What can patriotism mean to those who have some kind of belief in the brotherhood of man; who recognise, in some form or other, what the hymn writer referred to poetically as 'a country far beyond the stars'?

That higher loyalty means that our patriotism cannot be limited to the simple crudity of 'my country right or wrong'. It cannot be based on blindness to our country's faults and misdeeds. We cannot ignore such evils as the Dresden bombing or the invasion of Suez. To pretend that our country has never been arrogant or cruel, that it has always lived up to its highest ideals, is to do it a disservice. We cannot be content with what the hymn writer referred to as 'the love which asks no question'. Necessary criticism is not disloyalty.

But what are we loyal to? What does 'Britain' mean to us? What is our heritage? There are many Britains and

different heritages. For some our heritage means a rural idyll, nostalgia for the simple joys of 'Cider With Rosie' or 'Lark Rise to Candleford'. For some it is imperial echoes awakened by the pomp and precision of our great ceremonial occasions. For some it is our hard won right to free speech and our system of parliamentary democracy. For some it is the sense of brotherhood and mutual loyalty that built the trade union movement and fought the exploitation of man by man. True patriotism is shared pride in the whole of our heritage, not a selective emphasis designed to further current divisions. At a time when politics is increasingly polarised, when narrow ideologies of the left or the right are worshipped as idols, this broad loyalty to the whole of our nation is more than ever important.

Devotion to our national heritage can all too easily be used to promote narrow, sectional advantage. Or it can become merely a nostalgic retreat from the challenges of the present into a rose-tinted museum housing a past that never was. A true patriot knows that our heritage is only the womb from which a better world is struggling to be born. It is the foundation on which we are called to build a more human, more compassionate and more united society. Our present society is more deeply divided, and more pessimistic, than at any time in living memory and it is perhaps understandable, therefore, that our television screens threaten to drown us in a gooey flood of nostalgia for an idealised past. But our higher loyalty will not let us escape the struggle that easily.

National unity, indeed group loyalty of any kind, is most easily achieved in response to outside pressure. It seems to need an enemy to focus it, if not to create it. But those who believe in the brotherhood of man, and still more those who believe in the Fatherhood of God, cannot subscribe to a patriotism based on hatred and contempt for other people. Argie-bashing jingoism is not true patriotism. Devotion to our country means working for its unity and seeking to heal its divisions. But we have to do more than that. We have to seek a world unity, healing the division between East and West, and between North and South. Any lesser ideal in today's conditions is simply a death wish.

But if world unity, the brotherhood of man, is a necessary if remote ideal ought

38 NEWARK STREET
LONDON E1

Opening shortly: a Toc H
community house with
community facilities.

The house will have
seven residents.

If you know anyone
who would be interested
in living in a Toc H
Community House,
please contact:

Helen Powell
(Toc H Community Worker)
38 Newark Street
London E1 2AA
01 247 5110

Footnote: We hope to print an article
about this new Toc H venture in our
June issue.

we not to be actively encouraging patriotism to wither away? Is it not too dangerous by half? In its jingoistic, arrogantly self-satisfied manifestations that is undoubtedly so. But to believe that patriotism will wither away, with or without our encouragement, is to misunderstand human nature. It has to be transformed by an understanding that devotion to our own culture demands respect for the cultures of others (that kind of tolerance is, incidentally, central to our own particular national heritage in Britain). If it is right for me to take pride in my own British heritage then it must equally be right for my Bangladeshi friends to take pride in their particular culture and individuality.

I recall that, when I put before the Wakefield Trust Peter East's proposal for the creation of a hostel for young Bangladeshis, one of the Trustees suggested, in a memorable phrase, that our aims should be to teach the residents to eat bacon and eggs for breakfast. I argued then, and I still believe, that integration is only possible when those concerned have a real measure of self-confidence. Integration is not assimilation but genuine dialogue between equals. And that demands that all of us come to terms with our own heritage and our own identity. That is the kind of patriotism that I am prepared to vow to my country. And patriotism in that sense is, I believe, a necessary condition for achievement of the brotherhood of man.

John Perkins House: a Potted View

by Mark Beach
(a long-term volunteer who is giving two years to
work with Toc H in Nottingham)

As I sit at my desk and look out of the window I can see a picture of All Saints Parish. I see the Community Centre, the local Infants school, the Old Peoples' Complex and perhaps, most important, the Sir Walter Raleigh, the local pub, which we seem to frequent more and more. That's all outside. Inside I can only listen, but the sounds say something too. I can hear Paul's typewriter as he finishes the Institute Accounts. I can hear Jackie in the kitchen helping some of the Guides, from the company she has restarted, to do their Cookery Badge. Christine is at the door with some of the many children who see the House as a second home. So there you have it, but why are we doing these things, why are the places I mentioned so important?

The Parish of All Saints Nottingham may be described as typically Inner City. It contains all the landmarks to look for. It was first developed as the Middle Class residential area of Nottingham in the mid 19th century. The developers of the time believed that 'Nice' areas had certain characteristics. They had to have a nice park in which to take a pleasant stroll in the afternoon: we have the Arboretum but the locals hardly know that it exists. They also believed that the area should have a University College, a hospital, large houses and, of course, a large Church with a Vicarage to match. So All Saints was given all these things. This opulence lasted until about 1945-50 when the leases on the houses were beginning to come up for renewal and the talk was of massive redevelopment to bring all the Civic offices into the area and an Urban motorway as one of the main City arteries. All this uncertainty led to nothing happening and gradually the area fell into disrepair. The decline continued until 1980 when the plans were finally made that the area was to be residential once again.

This decision gave the Church an opportunity to develop itself. The old school buildings were converted into a Community Centre and some Workspaces. The Vicarage, originally a ten bedroomed affair, was divided into a house for the vicar and John Perkins House.

John Perkins House was started three years ago for two reasons: firstly to give people the experience of community living, to show those who live in the house something of the responsibility we have for each other and to be a sign to those outside the community that there



are other patterns of life besides the traditional family or living on your own. This idea does meet with some surprise and our friends in the parish think that the women do all the cooking . . . The second reason is to bring skills into an area that does not have many indigenous resources. Paul's work on the accounts of the Institute (part of the old Church school that has been converted into Workspaces and offices) has been invaluable and without Jackie there would not be a thriving Guide Company.

One of the residents has always been a Toc H Long-Term-Volunteer, who has been able to work full time in the parish (the others all have other jobs). This has meant that the house has had a link into the community work in the area and has made a contribution to it. Both James Power and now myself have been able to follow the principles of Toc H in our work: in the setting up of a Multi-Racial Youth Club and in the organisation of a community carnival in which we attempted to break down some of the barriers that exist between races and classes within the area. Hopefully this work will be able to continue. The need is certainly there and perhaps the long term outcome of it will be a stable youth club which can be a feeder for Toc H action groups.

As an LTV in the parish I have been able to build up links with all the groups I mentioned in the introduction (the publican of the Sir Walter Raleigh has run bars for us in the community centre!) and now we are in the position of being an accepted part of the community and the sounds that I spoke of are everyday ones. A West Indian lady paid us the compliment some time ago of saying we are an 'Everybody House'. It would be easy to rest on this, but the truth is that life is not as easy as that. When we were in Church one Sunday we were burgled by some of the children we know. They got into my bedroom and took about

£10 from different boxes. None of the money was mine. This kind of behaviour cannot be condoned but if the children have nothing else to do, and they want to draw attention to that fact, they simply attack one of the people who are trying to help them. Our anger at this was very real, but we also have to feel pity for them and try again to get alongside them, to get to know them and show them that we care, that we do love them.

The children concerned have all the odds stacked against them. The statistics in the last Census make devastating reading. Unemployment in the parish is at about 35-40%, well above the national figure. Perhaps more startling is the fact that of all families over half have only one parent. The results of this in practical terms are mind boggling. Supplementary Benefit is the only income for most families so when we have a teachers strike, and the children have to go home for lunch instead of the free school meal, there is not enough money to pay for them. These are just a few of the figures, but they do show something of the nature of the problem and why we do have to go on loving and caring, even when we are angry.

I have looked outside and listened inside and I have tried to paint a picture. It is a mixed picture, among all the sorrow and pain there is also joy. The two schools in the parish have a great atmosphere; the people, in spite of the problems they face, are always warm and friendly if you meet them in the street. The area has a lot going for it and with patience and time it will come.

As a footnote I would add that there are vacancies in the house and if anybody is interested in sharing the life with us, we would be glad to meet and talk with them. Please contact me, Mark Beach at John Perkins House, 14 All Saints Street, Nottingham NG7 4DP or phone (0602) 783859.

Bordon Letter

by Revd David Monkton

In 1956 a few Toc H members of various denominations met for a weekend retreat at Bordon in Hampshire. Their concern that Toc H members should be encouraged to reflect deeply on the work they do within Toc H led, among other things, to the production of a regular quarterly 'Bordon Letter' which continues to this day.

Whilst doing some pastoral visiting in Orkney recently, I visited the Italian Chapel on Lambholme, and I cannot do better than quote part of the booklet provided for tourists.

During the last war, several hundred Italian prisoners of war captured during the North Africa Campaign were sent to Orkney to work on the Churchill Barrier, a massive series of concrete causeways which seal the Eastern approaches to Scapa Flow.

The camp consisted at first of 13 or more cheerless huts, but the active Italians made concrete paths and planted flowers, until the whole area was transformed. To preside over the camp 'square' an artistic prisoner, Domenico Chiocchetti, made the figure of St George, built up from a framework of barbed wire covered with cement. New amenities were created: a theatre with scenery, and a recreation hut which included in its equipment a concrete billiard table, but one thing it lacked — a chapel.

Chiocchetti, together with the help of the commandant, the Padre and a band of enthusiastic workers, set to work on two nissen huts that had been given for the purpose, and as Chiocchetti began to design this chapel his imagination caught fire. Ideas flooded in his mind, but each one of them had to be expressed in the simplest material, most of it second hand and a proportion of it apparently worthless scrap.

Owing to the fortunes of war the chapel was in use only for a very short time, and when the prisoners left the island in the spring of 1945, Chiocchetti was left behind to finish the font, which he was then occupied in making, and a promise was made to the prisoners by the Lord Lieutenant of Orkney that the Orcadians would cherish this chapel. This

they have done, and every year it is visited by large numbers of tourists, and occasionally services are held there.

There are two things about this visit that said something to me about Toc H. The first was that the Barriers the Italians built to prevent the enemy entering Scapa Flow are now important road links between several islands in Orkney. The question is this. Have we learnt the art of transforming barriers into roads? In other words, have we learnt how to see things from different directions, and see them as opportunities rather than barriers?

Secondly, there is in the building of the Italian chapel the challenge of resourcefulness. Are we people who use the material that we have, even if it is other peoples 'throw aways' at times, and put it to some useful purpose?

In the chapel there is an illuminated enlargement of the prayer of St Francis that is very dear to the heart of Toc H.

'Lord make me an instrument of your peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love, where there is injury, pardon, where there is darkness light, where there is sadness joy . . .'

Out of this unhappy situation for Italian prisoners of war came a chapel which is a symbol of peace and joy, and a bond of friendship between the Orcadians and themselves.

The Toc H Movement also started out of the sadness of war, and part of our task, through our prayers and activity, is to see how we can transform things — to build bridges of friendship and goodwill among all kinds of people.

Small Ads

Small advertisements must be received (with remittance) five weeks before publication day, which is the 23rd of the preceding month. The charge is 5p a word (minimum 50p) plus VAT, to Point Three Magazine. Rates of display advertisements can be obtained from the Editorial Office, Toc H, 1 Forest Close, Wendover. Telephone: 0296 623911.

Clacton five berth caravan, fully equipped, excellent site facilities including pool, shops, children's playground and social centre. May/June £50 pw, July £55 pw, August £65 pw, September £50 pw. Full details from: Mr J A Turner, 60 Hall End Road, Wootton, Beds MK43 9HP. (Tel: 0234 768410).

Rockley Sands, Poole, Dorset. Six berth caravan. Live club entertainment on site, heated pool, supermarket. Available May - October. Mrs V Whyte, 5 Doric Avenue, Southborough, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. (Tel: Tunbridge Wells 28253).

Gloucestershire. Country cottage. B & B, family room, private bathroom. Good walking/touring for Glos. Cheltenham, Malvern, Cotswolds. Tel: Staunton Court 673.

Conwy. Dinner and B & B £10.50 per day. Weekends, midweek bookings. Ideal for walking, touring, near sea and mountains. Doreen and Bill Baxter, Lllys Gwilym Guest House, 3 Mountain Road, Cadnant Park, Conwy, Gwynedd, N Wales. Tel: 049 263 2351.

Jaywick, Clacton, Essex. Sea wall chalet, ideal for two adults, can sleep three. Car parking available, near shops. All electric. April to October £30 pw. Apply: Miss Nicholls, 38 Kings Road, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex.

Holiday House, sleeps five, near good beaches and shops £59 pw. Full July/August. Toc H, 12 Lister Street, Falmouth, Cornwall. (0326 312689).

Christian Singles. Social events, nationwide. Friendship contacts, weekend houseparties, fellowship groups. Holidays, home/abroad. Christian Friendship Fellowship, Dept B23, Edenthorpe, Doncaster.

Fund raising. Spring flower bulbs for resale at direct from grower prices. Good profits to be made on quality daffodils, tulips, crocus, hyacinths etc. Add a new dimension to your autumn fayres, coffee mornings etc. Price list sent on request. M K & B Chappell, Fengate Road, West Pinchbeck, Spalding, Lincs. (Tel: Pinchbeck Bars 381)

Raise funds quickly, easily. Superb ball-pens, combs, key fobs, diaries, etc gold stamped to your requirements. Details: Northern Novelties, Bradford BD1 3HE.



Photo: Basil M Kidd

Members of Deal and Walmer Branch collaborating with local Girl Guides to give a party for 60 mentally handicapped friends.

The Warden Manor Awards in International Youth Year



Every year, the Warden Manor Trust make a series of financial awards to encourage the promotion and development of Toc H in various parts of the United Kingdom. This year, the selection panel were conscious of the fact that 1985 is International Youth Year, and most of the projects supported involve young people. The list is as follows:

South Yorkshire District Pavilion Project £1,000	The Pavilion Project is a way in which people can begin to work together to build friendship and mutual confidence by accepting the challenge to plan and carry out community projects for the elderly, handicapped, single parent families and underprivileged children. The aim is to involve the whole community in caring.
The Birmingham Outward Group £200	To take a group of 12 unemployed people on a ten day walk on the Cleveland Way in Yorkshire. The group will back-pack their equipment and camp out overnight, and will be drawn from young people previously known to the Outward Group or referred by the Probation Service.
Colwyn Bay Branch £1,000	Learning for Leisure Project aimed mainly at unemployed young people aged 16 to 20 years old.
Broadland District (Projects Committee) £200	A New Project — A Playscheme for mentally handicapped children at Lowestoft, Suffolk, based at the local special school.
Northants Action Groups (NAGS) £250	A 'Deaf Doorbell' Scheme which provides a Flashing Light, to replace the doorbell, in deaf people's homes.
Isle of Wight District £125	A two day or weekend conference comprising young people and existing members in equal proportions.
Unit Action Group, Bangor £250	A one-to-one weekend for severely mentally handicapped adolescents, for 26 people in all, at the Toc H Adventure Centre at Port Penryhn, Bangor. A wide variety of activities will include watersports, social activities and shopping.
Harrow Group £700	To acquire a community minibus in the Harrow area, which will be controlled and maintained by the Toc H Harrow Group. The minibus is an ex-ambulance and can accommodate wheelchairs.
Tyne/Wear District £750	To start weekend breaks for the elderly, housebound, lonely, bereaved etc, using young people, especially the unemployed, to help.
Bedford Group £250	Emergency Flashing Light Scheme for Elderly and/or Disabled living alone and at risk.
Thurrock 'Griffins' Youth Group £600	The Griffins Group has only been established for a few months but plans a regular monthly disco in the area for ordinary and exceptional kids, both handicapped and disadvantaged.
Moorlands TAG £200	To create a Nature Walk at Welburn Hall Special School (for the physically handicapped 7-18 years). The intention is to clear the way through an uneven, wooded area and make a path of concrete for wheelchairs.
South Staffs & Wulfrun District £250	Extension of Wednesfield's Holiday round-up — a playscheme first run in 1984.
Melton Mowbray Men's Branch £500	For a holiday at Poachers Den for the residents of Brookfield House, Melton Mowbray, who are children from broken homes etc, and also a self-catering holiday for mentally handicapped people.
Weir Here Group £1,000	The group has acquired a lease on a cellar property underneath the Local Unemployment Office. They intend to open this as an 'Activity Centre' for young unemployed, and will also be running community projects, venture trips and special interest groups.
Ryton Branch £400	To make Ryton Branch rooms suitable for use as a small holiday centre for underprivileged or handicapped children and for use by the elderly for a luncheon club, and for young people on 'learning for leisure' or similar weekends.
Junior Hockey Team £300	The proposed activity is to set up a Toc H Junior Hockey Team, with girls aged between 14 and 18, from the Bangor/Anglesey area.